

Wm. Martin

Leicester, Massachusetts, Dec^r. 24.
1845.

To, J. B. Estlin Esq.

Dear Sir, This morning I expected to have had time to-day to write you fully all I had to say to you. Alas! I am disappointed. What time I have been able to give to letter-writing I have been occupied in writing to Miss Carpenter; and now, at 9 P.M., I commence this to you - which hour is the orthodox bed time among the people here; I however, being a heretic in almost all things, am also in this, making any time, from 10 to 11, my hour of retiring; but I expect to trench considerably on that this evening. Let me stop to say, that I would not have imposed all the above on you, had I known when I began it would have filled half a sheet. I am under the necessity of despatching this to Boston tomorrow morning (Tuesday) although the Steamship does not sail till Thursday, as it is to go in a box which Messrs. Crosby & Co. will be forwarding to Chapman, London. I intend in future, whenever I can, to avail myself of similar opportunities of transmitting letters, pamphlets, &c. to my Bristol friends. The fact that they were burdened with the postage charges of our correspondence, both ways, has troubled me always. In this way, I shall save you pockets the postage charges on my letters, I hope.

In ~~re~~ your letter to me of Nov. 1st, you express a desire for some information about our postage laws, and particularly as to the cost to me of the identical letter you were writing.

On the 1st July last, an entirely new Post Office Law came into operation throughout the United States, giving us too, comparatively speaking, cheap postage, viz. letters of half an ounce 5 cts. ($2\frac{1}{2}$ pence) for 300 miles - over that, 10 cents; double these rates for letters over half an ounce, up to 1 ounce; and so on, adding 5 cts. for every half-ounce, or fraction of $\frac{1}{2}$ ounce. Newspapers go free of charge to places 30 miles from their place of publication; beyond that, & under 100 miles, 1 cent; over 100 miles, $1\frac{1}{2}$ cts. Foreign newspapers (I believe) are charged $2\frac{1}{2}$ cents. Your letter of Nov. 1st (2 sheets) probably weighed under $\frac{1}{2}$ an ounce. Had it come to me, at Leicester, by ^(50 miles from Boston) mail, ^{it} it would have been charged the regular postage, 5 cts., with 2 cts. additional for its being a Ship letter. As it was, it went to my Father's care, who was charged 6 cents on it, being a Ship letter, & having no farther to go, by which regular postage could be levied. - Under the old law, the postage from Boston to Leicester was 10 cents on a single letter, and a letter was considered double, if there were 2 sheets, or 2 pieces, of paper in it - treble, if 3 sheets, or pieces, &c., no matter how small. Under this law I have received letters from England enclosed in envelopes, which were charged as follows: for the one sheet enclosed ten cents, for the envelope ten cents, and two cents additional for its being a Ship letter; in all 22 cents from Boston to Leicester (less than 4 hours passage by Railroad & Coach) for a letter which had crossed the ocean, besides travelling through England, for one shilling or 24 cents. This was so palpably absurd, that I resolved to request my English friends to direct their letters in future to my father's care, which has generally been done; this is of less consequence under the new postage law than before. This law has been now six months in operation. The result so far is a great loss to the Post Office Department; and a repeal of the law is strenuously urged. As if 6 months could give the law

a fair trial! The change will not be made, probably, at present, if ever.

Your Country & ours seem to have been, and yet to be, in very critical positions toward each other, about Oregon. A good deal of alarm has actually been felt that there ~~there~~ would be war. Whether I am apathetic, or what, I cannot say, but I never have been apprehensive of a war between the U.S. and England. I cannot make it seem any other than a most foolish & almost impossible thing. I know we have utterly unscrupulous men at the nominal head of our national affairs. Would to God New England was forever separated from all connection with them! With the Slaveholding States I mean. If we do not cut asunder the tie which binds us, Slavery will be the millstone which will drag us to destruction. - To return; I do not anticipate a war. I believe there is too much good sense and right feeling in both nations to ~~possibly~~ permit it. Though I would not trust to what right feeling on the subject there is, in this country, to avert it. But it is well known that the Slaveholding Power dreads a war, and especially with England. It would be a signal for a general Slave-insurrection - and they know it; and they will not venture a war, that I regard as certain; and if they do not venture it, it will not be; for they now have everything completely their own way throughout the land. The talk of Mr. Polk about war, &c. is universally considered, by sensible men, as only talk. It is thought to be the very best way for a man to get popularity, and for him to secure re-election to the Presidency. ~~And~~

Let me acknowledge, & thank you for, your letters of Nov. 1st and Nov. 10th (the latter ^{coming} in the Anti-Slavery Box). It gives me great pleasure to hear from you, and I am gratified to know that you, and my other Bristol friends, think so kindly of my letters. I always

with they were better worth sending, and that they contain
more than would be useful to you. - I have also to thank you,
and do so heartily, for the little volume of Chambers' Miscellany
you sent me. It is a beautiful little volume, in form & substance.
The tract on American Slavery I have read only hastily, having
been much crowded for time since receiving the packet which
contained it. My children (9 $\frac{1}{2}$ & 8 yrs. old) were deeply interested
in the story of Joan of Arc, which I read aloud to them. It is told
with ~~so~~ much simplicity & perspicuity, and with a frankness
most honorable to the writer & publishers. We know a good deal
here of the efforts of the Messrs. Chambers, of their liberal and
friendly treatment of their work-people, &c. It is my rule never to
pass unread anything which purports to come from Chambers
Ed. Journal. When in London, I bought the numbers of their
Cyclopaedia of Eng. Literature, ^{so far as issued,} and have since ^{had} imported for me the
remainder, which are now bound in two substantial, handsome
volumes, and I value them much. I wish I could get the
other volumes of this "Miscellany of Useful & Entertaining Tracts,"
bound in the style of the one you sent me. I have half a mind
to ask ^{you} if you could, in any way, send them to me, say through Mr.
Chapman of London, to Care of Crosby & Nichols, Boston? If you
could, I should expect to know the whole cost to you, and would
gladly send you in return any American books you wished for; you
say, in one of your letters, you wish you could get Am. publications
more handily than now. Yet I know it would be some trouble
to you, and I know you have enough else to do, and Miss Can-
penter says you are not yet strong again; and I would re-
pent to have the books than subject you to inconvenience and
annoyance for so small a matter. So if you cannot ^{with} perfect
convenience do anything about it, pray forget it entirely. -

I would also thank you for your address on Mesmerism, for several
papers, &c. I have distributed the Circular, touching the Dispensary, and

some physicians of my acquaintance.

You expressed a wish to see Jonathan Walker's Narrative. I have pleasure in sending you a copy. It is a thoroughly "invar-
ished" ^{narrative} ~~one~~ as you will perceive. You may find some things in
 it which you will deem had better have been omitted; as in the
 case of F. Douglass's book, in the instance you referred to. I confess
 I should not wish that passage struck out of F. D.'s book, though
 it ~~should~~ ^{does} perhaps make it objectionable for the reading of some,
 especially young persons. So far am I influenced by a feeling,
 similar to your own, in this particular, that I had torn out from
 Walker's Narrative an engraving representing the punishment
 with the paddle, long before I thought of sending it to you. —
 I also send you Mr. Sumner's Oration on the "True Grandeur of Nations,"
 an Oration which produced a great sensation at its delivery, and
 has been ^{greatly} admired, and much censured, since. You have perhaps
 fallen in with some allusion to it in your reading. I think you
 will be pleased with it. Mr. Sumner is a ~~young~~ lawyer of Boston,
 about 35 yrs. of age, a favorite pupil of the late Judge Story, one
 who has carved his own way to eminence in his profession, and
 from ^{him} much good is expected. — Wm. Goodell, the author of the
 tract on the "Duty of Secession from a Corrupt Church" (which I send
 you) is an Orthodox man; one who strongly dissented from Mr.
 Garrison, when he, some time earlier, took essentially the same ground.
 Mr. Garrison has never denied that there has been, is, and should be
 a Church; yet has he been represented as aiming to overthrow the
 Church, Ministry, Gospel, and all. He has plainly & vehemently
 (how hard is it to smother indignation in such a case) denied that
 that was a Church of Christ which excused Slaveholding & Slave-
 trading, with all their horrible accompaniments (for such is practically
 the fact) which apologised for those, ~~may~~ which claimed for them

the sanction of the Old Testament, and the permission at least
of the New! Did he not right? Said he not truly? Oh! Sir,
were you only here, to see and feel the destructive influence
these great ecclesiastical bodies are exerting, both as bodies
and through their individual members, I believe you would
deem it eminently a case for the plainest, severest language.
The Clergy of this land, as to the great majority of them, are
stone-deaf to the cries of humanity. They are thoroughly what
the scribes & lawyers were in the days of Jesus "blind leaders
of the blind" - "Straining out gnats, & swallowing camels" -
and destined to a dire fall, as I solemnly believe; - unless
they repent, & do works meet for repentance. - But I ran
away from what I am about. I send you also a tract,
prepared by Wendell Phillips, "Can Abolitionists vote, or take
office, under the U. S. Constitution." I should like to have
Miss Carpenter read it, as (in one of her letters to me) she seemed
to think that the Abolitionists were not justifiable in taking
this stand, - that though they might not be able to take office
themselves, they might assist to put others in. Query. Can a
man delegate another to do ^{for him} what he could not conscientiously
do ^{for} himself? Can a man, who believes it would be a sin
for him to swear to support the U. S. Constⁿ, with its Pro-Slavery
Clauses, put another in a situation where he must so swear? -
I send you a "Practical Christian" of Aug. 9., as it contains a notice
of our First of August Celebration in Leicester. I wish that you may
see how such a man as Adin Ballou speaks of myself, and of
other persons, &c. &c. in the town where I reside. Adin Ballou was
formerly a minister of the Restorationist order. He has founded a
Social Community in Milford in this County (25 miles from ~~here~~), and
is devoted to the cause of Non-Resistance, i.e. (as he holds it)
Non-Retaliation;

he is a man who wins the affection and confidence of all who know him, in a remarkable manner.

[I feel that I shall get the name of the tattler. 'Ull!'

I do not write from love of writing; for it is rather an irksome business to me. But I want you should know something about us. So I write on, as I would talk. I have not time to condense.]

I also send 3 copies of the

"Unitarian Annual Register for 1846" (a new thing, got up by Mr. Liversmore, author of the Commentary) one for yourself, one for Mr. Armstrong, and one for Mr. James. May I trouble you to put them in the hands of those gentlemen? The 1/2 doz. copies of our "Protest", you may perhaps, with advantage, distribute.

I was in Boston last week, partly with a view of attending the opening of the Anti-Slavery Bazaar at Faneuil Hall. As I have spoken of this in my letter to Miss C., I will not repeat. I looked over the Bristol donations with a peculiar pleasure. I saw the contributions of yourself, your daughters, your sister-in-law, and your "cook" and "house-maid", and ~~felt~~ was glad you were all, in this good work, of one heart & mind. - Your sympathy & help are everything to ~~over~~ the cause; I speak now of the Br. and Irish friends generally. My father asked me, "On what terms do these people abroad furnish all these beautiful & valuable articles to your Fair, year after year?" I smiled and told him there were no terms - that these things were a free gift, bestowed in a generous confidence that they would be well & faithfully used; and, I added, not only do they freely give their time, thought, ingenuity, labour, and the fruits of these to the cause, but when the ~~thing~~ articles are completed & all ready to be forwarded to their destination, ~~money~~ ^{has been} raised to pay the freight of them to our very doors. He

acknowledged that this was doing the ~~other~~ thing in a most liberal and whole-hearted manner. As I walked up & down Faneuil Hall, I could not but express the wish that they - all of them, every soul - who had contributed so richly to that scene ~~might~~ could all be there, and be witnesses to that result of their labours, united with equally indefatigable efforts among ourselves. I really do desire, exceedingly, that some of my English friends might come ^{among} us. - I saw highly, that some of my English friends might come ^{among} us. - I saw also some articles - table napkins, &c. - from Mr. Armstrong. They were very pretty indeed. I saw the names of many, too, I did not know; and I felt thankful for this result of your labours. About 40 ladies (I should think) acted as Saleswomen at the different tables; among them Mrs. Follen, Miss Chapman, the Misses Weston (sisters of Mr. Maria W. Chapman) Miss Cabot (sister of Mrs. Follen), Mrs. Theodore Parker. Unquestionably the result will be highly successful. By & bye, you will have a full ^{and detailed} account, from Mr. Chapman, probably, of the whole affair.

The letter (copy) from the freed-man of St. Kitts I design to have published in the Liberator. I cannot think you would object; yet perhaps you might. Therefore I think I had better wait till I know.

As for the alarm felt by Mrs. Foy concerning the "Liberator", it seems to me uncalled-for, I confess. The writings of C. B. Stearns (a very young man) are indeed exceedingly objectionable oftentimes; but I do not think calculated to produce any deep impression. At any rate, Mr. Garrison never could be induced to reject from his paper articles (however different from his views, or however erroneous he might deem them) provided he had reason to think ^{them honest} expressions of ~~any~~ serious & truth-seeking minds. Mr. Stearns, where he is known, is looked upon as a somewhat conceited and quite extravagant ~~the~~ man. I do not know him.

No. 3. I must not close my letter without noticing some of your inquiries, &c. in your two recent letters to me. As to Messrs. Keep & Dawes of Oberlin Institute, Ohio, - I cannot give you any information from personal knowledge. They are rigidly orthodox men, but somewhat emancipated from the spiritual rule of the old ecclesiastical bodies. The Oberlin Institute is, as I have reason to believe, in a very flourishing condition, educating (with more or less thoroughness, according to the time of their stay) a very large number of young men & women. There is not there, however, that cordial liberality, & freedom from sectarianism, which many would like to see; and I suspect that, even with them, the interests & claims of humanity are subordinated to the demands of their sectarian operations. I should not think that you were "taken in" by these men, ~~through the over-sight of them, that states might have been doing~~ ~~sectarian in regard to~~. But, I must add, that I do not know enough about Oberlin Inst. & its professors to speak with confidence.

You refer to Mr. Keep as authority for the statement that in Louisiana the penalty for teaching a free colored person in a Sabbath-school is, for first offence, \$500. fine - for 2^d offence, death. It may be so. I think it highly probable. In my last to you, I could turn to no authority for such a statement. I have, since that, seen a similar statement, I think, in one of F. Douglass's speeches in Ireland. Of one thing I have no doubt; that, ^{many} slaveholders would not hesitate to put to death one who was found teaching, or (as they say) tampering with, their slaves. They would not wait for a law, nor be deterred by the want of law. This is only too certain.

Do you not use too strong language when you speak of Miss Martineau's fall? Is Miss M. fully convinced of the deceitfulness of her servant? If she were, is there, can there be, any doubt that she would frankly admit it, at whatever cost to herself?

The "Protest" of our 173 Ministers is indeed, as you say, a most important move. The object of my letter in the Worcester Spy was not to impair its effect, but (twofold) 1st. To correct a mis-statement of the Editor. 2^d. To direct public attention to the non-subscribers. I wish they might feel necessitated to come out with an apology, or a defence, or anything.

You say "I so often agree in opinion with those who attack your [my] party, that I find it a difficult matter to defend it as I could wish to do." To make anything like a full reply to this would be too serious a work for this late hour of the night. I feel little of the difficulty you speak of. Where I disagree with those, with whom I generally act in this or any other cause, I do not hesitate to say so. I do not think it necessary to make it a condition of joint action, that I should be able to approve all that others think & say. If I thought so, I would take myself out of the Unitarian body without delay. In the Anti-Slavery Cause we have a great work - a noble & glorious end - a high duty - a solemn trust; let all labour - each and all - as the Spirit gives them power; let each speak, as the Spirit gives him utterance. Better some wildness & looseness of expression, than fetters & restraints on the mind or lips - especially in the Anti-Slavery cause. This seems to me a safe and sure position; one in which I secure my own rights, do nothing to impair those of others.

and combine all that is harmonious in the working out
of the great end in view. A just and equal freedom to
one another, while we strive for the freedom of the Slave.
This is the principle. If then you dissent from us, Sir, do
not conceal it, & especially if it be on any important point.
I am sure you agree with us in enough to enable you to be
a hearty co-worker; and the longer you are in it, the more,
(I believe) will you agree in the great positions occupied
by the "old-organised" Abolitionists of this Country. Their
position with regard to the Pro-Slavery ~~and~~ character of the U. S.
constitution is fully sustained by Cassius M. Clay - a good
authority in the case; as it is by ~~several~~ ^{trustworthy} men very
generally. The case is too plain for them to doubt. Yet the
"Liberty Party" persist in maintaining the purely Antislavery
character of that instrument. A greater contradiction to all
the facts of the case can hardly be imagined.

I am glad to hear you say that "Amicus" (in the Inquirer)
goes too far, in your opinion, in defence of the Amⁿ. Clergy.
A subsequent letter signed "A lover of Charity & truth" (I think)
is very much worse. I expressed my opinion of it in a late
letter to Mr. Armstrong - pretty warmly, I believe. Such
sentiments we have any quantity of here. They seem altogether
out of place, and unnatural, in an English Unitⁿ. paper. Yet
would I not proscribe, or censure, or give up, the "Inquirer" for
admitting such dangerous palliations of the grossest offences against
God and man. I rejoice that ~~the~~ ^{its} columns are ^{as} freely open
to the exposure & correction of the error, as to the error itself -
+ Mr. Sturge's assertion that the "Liberty party" ~~was~~ ^{is} the efficient
Antislavery Society, by contrast with the old Abolitionists, and
that it "embraces all the finest minds among the Abolitionists"
is unworthy of his reputation, and is wholly untrue. The

or Society
party which embraces the names of Phillips, Garrison,
Quincy, Follen, Mott, Child, Chapman, Kelly, &c.
has names which are inferior to none, ~~and~~ in the Anti-
Slavery ranks, or out of them.

Even Judge Jay, by far
the strongest man who has acted with the "Liberty party"
utterly rejects their doctrine of the Antislavery character of the
Constitution, and heartily adopts & advocates ~~the~~ ^{our} position, that
there is no hope for the Slave save in the Dissolution of this
Union.

As to the matter of voting or non-voting, I

would refer you to an article in the "Liberator" of Nov. 7. 1845.
headed Disunion Ballots. This is all the voting, it seems to

me, which can be done by Antislavery men, under our Const.

In looking over yours of Nov. 1st, I find you saying with
regard to our Ministers' "Protest" - "I expect the Liberator will
call it Pro-Slavery, because people are left to act out their
own judgment & conscience". I trust you have seen what

the "Lib." did say; how hearty & unreserved it was
in its commendations! An agreeable surprise!

Now I must stop, though I have been obliged to pass
over several topics untouched in your excellent letter of
Nov. 1st.

My sincere regards to Miss Estlin. Please
say to Mr. James that I had hoped to write him, by this
opportunity, & thank him for his note, copies of Sermon, &c.
but must wait awhile. My respects to him, & to Mr. Armstrong
and all my Bristol friends.

Hoping that you will soon fully recover your health
and strength, I remain, Respectfully

Yours, Samuel May.